

Unwanted contact and grooming: factsheet

Key points

- [Online grooming](#) is when an older person tricks someone under 18 into thinking they're in a close relationship so they can sexually abuse them. This is illegal and should be reported to the police and the online platform or service where contact was made.
- [The eSafety Guide](#) includes information on app features that can increase the risk of exposure to online predators, such as chat functions and location sharing.
- [eSafety Education](#) has resources to help teachers embed online abuse prevention in the curriculum.
- All students need to be taught specific technical, personal and social skills to help avoid online predators.

Facts and stats

Our research shows one in four young people have been contacted by someone they don't know online. Usually this contact is harmless but at times it can be inappropriate, unwanted or unsafe. This can happen even if they initially welcomed the contact.

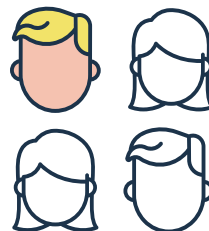
At worst, the contact can involve grooming a child to sexually abuse them. This abuse can happen in a physical meeting, but it increasingly occurs online when young people are tricked or persuaded into sexual activity on webcams or into sending or posting sexual images.

Watch this [case study](#) about unwanted contact.

According to eSafety research



38%
of young people
chat to strangers
online



1 in 4 young people
have been contacted
by someone they
don't know online

How to report and block

Reporting to police

Online child sexual exploitation, including online grooming and inappropriate contact, should be reported to the Australian Federal Police-led [Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation \(ACCCE\)](#).

For emergency situations call [Triple Zero \(000\)](#). For non-emergency situations that still require a police response, contact your local police station ([131 444](#)).

Making a complaint to the social media company

Sexually suggestive comments and messages or requests for intimate images should be reported to the social media service, even if the person or account is blocked so they can't make contact again. Reporting this kind of contact makes the internet is safer for everyone.

Find out how to report to the social media company and block accounts by checking [The eSafety Guide](#).

Reporting to eSafety

You can report illegal and restricted content, including child sexual exploitation material, terrorism or other extreme violence, to eSafety. All reports about [illegal and restricted online content](#) can be made anonymously – that means you don't have to give your name or contact details when you [report it](#).

App features that increase the risk

[The eSafety Guide](#) includes information to help teachers and students choose safer apps and report and block unwanted contact and sexual approaches.

Messaging/online chat

Many apps, games and social networks offer a chat function, using either voice or text. Messages are often short, allowing other participants to respond quickly. The communication can be one-on-one or involve a group of people. It may be between participants who are known to each other or strangers. Depending on the service and the settings chosen by the user, the messages or chat history may be publicly available online.

Apps used for chat include: [Facebook Messenger](#), [Instagram](#), [Omegle](#), [Whatsapp](#), [Snapchat](#)

Location sharing

Location sharing is the ability to let other people know where you are, using satellite technology (GPS) or other methods. Many apps, devices and online services allow you to share your location at a moment in time, for example if you 'check-in' somewhere or as an automatic function. Others track your movement between locations in real time, when your device is online or while you are using the app or service. Depending on the settings available, you may be able to select whether or not to share your location, who to share it with and when to share it.

Apps used for location sharing include: [Snapchat](#), [Spotafriend](#), [PokemonGo](#)

eSafety resources — Unwanted contact and grooming

The eSafety website includes advice for [kids](#), [young people](#) or [adults](#) about dealing with unwanted contact.

Lower Primary

[Hector's World](#) (animated series)

Middle Primary

[Keep it sweet online](#) (animation)

Upper Primary

[Cybersmart Detectives](#) (animation)

Lower Secondary

[Young and eSafe](#) (videos and lesson plans)

Upper Secondary

[Online dating](#) (video)

[Emily's story](#) (video and web content)

Resources for parents

[Parental controls](#) (advice on safe searching and device filters)

Prevent and manage cyberbullying

Early Years to Year 2

From Early Years to Year 2 students should build skills in:

- recognising emotional reactions to different online interactions
- categorising safe and unsafe behaviours online, for example showing private body parts
- learning how to set up apps and games in different ways to prevent unwanted contact
- recalling help seeking strategies such as telling an adult.

Years 3 to 6

Between Years 3 to 6, students should:

- identify warning signs that an online friend might be unsafe to talk to
- recognise situations that might increase their exposure to inappropriate contact from adults, for example switching from a public conversation in an online forum to chatting privately
- analyse the benefits and risks of different privacy settings and adjusting them in specific ways, for example having a public YouTube channel compared to your contact being listed publicly on WhatsApp
- practise strategies for refusing to engage in unsafe behaviours online such as requests for nude images or sexual advances
- describe how to report grooming offences on social media
- understand the value of online support services to help them understand and process instances of sexual contact online.

Years 7 to 10

From Years 7 to 10 students should:

- understand the nature and legislation relating to grooming and sexual harassment online
- recognise their own emotional responses to grooming and sexual harassment situations online
- regularly review and update their privacy settings and adjust them in specific ways, for example having a public YouTube channel compared to your contact being listed publicly on WhatsApp
- locate a variety of sources of support if they experience grooming or sexual harassment online.

Appendix A: Curriculum links

K2	3-6	7-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online safety practices • Help seeking strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying warning signs • Using technology safely • Critical thinking • Strategies for refusing to engage in unsafe behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law • Understanding sexual harassment • Understanding gendered violence • Critical thinking
HPE	HPE	HPE
<p>Identify and practise emotional responses that account for own and others' feelings (ACPPS020)</p> <p>Identify people and demonstrate protective behaviours and other actions that help keep themselves safe and healthy (ACPPS003)</p> <p>Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations (ACPPS005)</p>	<p>Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour and relationships (ACPPS056)</p> <p>Describe and apply strategies that can be used in situations that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe (ACPPS035)</p>	<p>Plan, rehearse and evaluate options for managing situations where their own or others' health, safety and wellbeing may be at short or long term risk (ACPPS091)</p> <p>Propose, practise and evaluate responses in situations where external influences may impact on their ability to make healthy and safe choices (ACPPS092)</p> <p>Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses (ACPPS094)</p>
Digital Technologies	Digital Technologies	Digital Technologies
<p>Explore how people safely use common information systems to meet information, communication and recreation needs (ACTDIP005)</p> <p>Create and organise ideas and information using information systems independently and with others, and share these with known people in safe online environments (ACTDIP006)</p>	<p>Plan, create and communicate ideas and information, including collaboratively online, applying agreed ethical, social and technical protocols (ACTDIP022)</p> <p>Plan, create and communicate ideas and information independently and with others, applying agreed ethical and social protocols (ACTDIP013)</p>	<p>Create interactive solutions for sharing ideas and information online, taking into account safety, social contexts and legal responsibilities (ACTDIP043)</p>
HASS	HASS	HASS
<p>Collect data and information from observations and identify information and data from sources provided (ACHASSI035)</p>	<p>Who makes rules, why rules are important and the consequences of rules not being followed (ACHASSK070)</p>	<p>The types of law in Australia, including criminal law and civil law, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law (ACHCK064)</p> <p>Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS084)</p> <p>Examine primary sources and secondary sources to determine their origin, purpose and reliability (ACHASSI156)</p>
General capabilities – ICT Capability	General capabilities – ICT Capability	General capabilities – ICT Capability
<p>Use appropriate ICT tools safely to share and exchange information with appropriate known audiences</p>	<p>Identify the risks to identity, privacy and emotional safety for themselves when using ICT and apply generally accepted social protocols when sharing information in online environments, taking into account different social and cultural contexts</p>	<p>Identify and value the rights to identity, privacy and emotional safety for themselves and others when using ICT and apply generally accepted social protocols when using ICT to collaborate with local and global communities</p>

Visit the [Online Safety Curriculum Connection](#) to:

- identify more content in the Australian Curriculum that supports the teaching and learning of online safety
- access a range of interdisciplinary resources developed to support the teaching and learning of online safety.

Appendix B: Research and useful links

[Young people and social cohesion](#) – eSafety Commissioner

[Unwanted contact and grooming](#) – eSafety Commissioner

[Online grooming](#) – ThinkUKnow



Updated July 2023